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Gardens and ideas

Foundation myths

Reflecting on writing



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Gardens of the mind and memory: Molly Barr Smith (photographer), selection of garden images from photograph album of Birksgate, Glen Osmond, South Australia, 1913—see our story 'Gardens lost and found' on page 14.

Cover: Jacques Charoux, 'Colours Dreaming' (1996), after the E. Phillips Fox painting 'The Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay', reproduced by courtesy of Wollongong City Gallery. If you like your Cook deconstructed see Jacques Charoux's story on page 5, and if Cook and the Enlightenment is more your thing, see our notice on page 31 of a new exhibition and accompanying book 'James Cook and the exploration of the Pacific'.

Gardens and ideas

Peter Watts

How I admire the sub-title to Richard Aitken's new book *The Garden of Ideas: four centuries of Australian style*. Four centuries. Aren't we meant to be just 200+ years? True—but those years do touch four different centuries. 'Four centuries' sounds so confident. I like it because it so emphatically ignores the idea that we are a young country that I tire of hearing. It's as if we, as Australians, emerged out of nowhere, and with no cultural traditions. The first Australians had tens of thousands of years to learn how to 'garden' the landscape. We ignored it until recent times, and to our shame. Later arrivals, beginning towards the end of the eighteenth century, brought other cultural traditions—the highfalutin landscape traditions that came from the Enlightenment—as well as the common English cottage garden traditions of more ordinary folk. Plants and ideas arrived from The Cape for the whole time that sailing ships came from Britain. The picturesque and the gardenesque movements found fertile ground here in our glorious climate. So too did Mediterranean and, later, Asian traditions and practices. Like other aspects of Australian cultural life some of these influences and traditions were directly transplanted here whilst others merged and blended into complex design and gardening practices, generating their own home-grown versions to accommodate new climates and new circumstances.

It is now around 35 years since the serious study of garden history in Australia commenced with studies of gardens in each state, and which culminated in the establishment of the Australian Garden History Society in 1980. When I think back to those times I am embarrassed at the naivety of our thinking and understanding. How far we have come in such a short time—accepting and acknowledging the astonishing understanding Aboriginal people have for our landscape and how to manage it, understanding the history of our garden heritage, recognising and celebrating the diversity inherent in a modern multi-cultural Australia, and ultimately generating indigenous styles that are recognisably Australian and which, in my view, have much to teach other parts of the world.

How proud we should be that the AGHS has been at the forefront of the study and understanding of the place gardens and gardening have played in the maturing of our cultural identity. No one back then could have contemplated that just 30 years later we would have achieved such confidence and sophistication. Then we viewed the world from a largely Anglo-centric position. At least those of us engaged in these things did, despite the fact that, at least in my case, I lived amongst Greeks and Italians whose gardening traditions I benefited from each weekend when baskets of fruit and vegetables were handed over the back fence and gratefully received. It seems astonishing now that we ignored the Mediterranean traditions that surrounded us and which had so much to offer. We have much to thank George Seddon for in that respect. He not only wrote and spoke about it but practiced it with great success, and style, in his own garden in Fremantle.

I say 'style' deliberately. Not fashion, but style. It implies more rigour, deliberateness, intellect, and knowledge than does fashion. It comes, I think, with confidence, and it is no surprise that we are seeing the emergence of

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some very stylish and utterly Australian gardens in recent times. It is very exciting to see this emergence of a confident, diverse, yet uniquely Australian style. It says much about our maturity that we can now create rather than imitate, experiment rather than copy, and play with our

gardens with a light spirit. The next 30 years offer great promise. I can't wait to see what new styles will emerge. Let's hope they beat the fashionable, but dreary, gardens that so often pass for style in the hands of the magazine editors and real estate agents.

Grace Fraser: an appreciation

Landscape architecture is such a well established profession today it must be difficult for many young people to realise that in the two decades following the last war there were so few of us in practice in Australia that we knew, or at least knew of, each other. Then during the 1960s as moves to organise the profession got underway we began to know one another better as we met to discuss and plan its future.

Victoria was the only state where women were in the majority and where they played the leading roles. Grace Fraser was a member of this group, most of whom had studied at Burnley. She worked in a characteristically selfless way, constantly to support the more prominent members, Beryl Mann, Mervyn Davis, and Margaret Hendry, all of who she knew well. She was especially close to Beryl Mann, working with her on several important projects, and Beryl's protracted illness and early death dealt Grace a severe blow.

Grace's other close associate in the landscape architectural profession was John Stevens and she worked with him in the period before he left Melbourne for Canberra. It was in his office in 1956 that I first met her and the last time I saw her was with John just before his death in 2007. Grace remained a close friend and helped support him after he moved to the Anzac Hostel in Brighton. Now, with Grace's death we have lost another of the pioneers of the profession and one who helped create some of the best landscapes designed in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s.

Richard Clough

An obituary for Grace Fraser (1921–2010), prepared by Anne Latreille, appeared in *The Age* on Saturday, 31 July 2010. Her passing brings into focus the important role that the Australian Garden History Society—and especially its branches—can play in assisting significant archival holdings to be placed in appropriate care.

When I last called to see Grace Fraser at her nursing home it was obvious her possessions had been pared down to the barest essentials—a radio, a simple vase of flowers, her spectacles, but there also was *Australian Garden History*. I'm sure the theme of the April/May/June issue (sustainability, climate change, and fugitive heritage) would have appealed to her.

Of the many related organisations that Grace Fraser belonged to, it was the Australian Garden History Society's Victorian Branch that responded to the request from her cousin to assist with disposal of her papers. As is frequently the case in these situations it had to be done in haste, as her home and office where the material was held, was to be sold. We were pleased to be able to act quickly and have the State Library of Victoria Manuscripts Librarian, Kevin Molloy, salvage files and plans relating to Grace's long working life as one of the earliest practitioners of landscape architecture and conservation planning in Victoria.

The archive reflects the work she undertook for architects such as Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell in designing school grounds, the Public Works Department, local councils, the National Trust of Australia, and private clients. There are also plans by colleagues Emily Gibson, with whom Grace worked prior to 1950, and John Stevens, with whom she worked on the landscaping of Monash University.

On the wall above her desk were pasted related notes, such as the dimensions for bus parking, but among these was an attractive Margaret Preston card. It was from Paul Fox and in the card he said he hoped she liked it. She obviously did for it was on her wall for nearly thirty years. Paul spoke movingly at Grace Fraser's memorial service of her considerable contribution to fields of landscape and conservation, and especially of landscape design around Melbourne.

Pamela Jellie

Strangers on the Shore

Jacques Charoux

The heroic image of Australia's foundation myth, 'The Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay' by E. Phillips Fox, provides the raw material for a startling triptych of paintings.

Landing at Botany Bay

I discovered the iconic, momentous image of 'The Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay', by E. Phillips Fox some time after moving to Australia. I admired the imagination of the artist in concretising an historical and political event of significance with such narrative technique; being able to tell us a story through such lyrical imagery. I was so inspired by it that I thought of deconstructing and reconstructing the painting in a more contemporary way and with hindsight of a century. A few years earlier I had painted a negative of Jacques-Louis David's 'Napoleon Crossing the Alps' (1801) and it was a challenge I wanted to repeat, but this time with an Australian painting as the subject matter.

But before going further I have to introduce myself. I was born in Mauritius from four generations of Franco-Mauritians on both sides of the family.



My ancestor Pierre Charoux came to l'Isle de France (Mauritius) from Corrèze, Limousin (France) in 1790. On my mother's side Pierre Jacques Tanguy Desmarais came from Brittany in 1796. The Dutch had exploited the desert island for just over a century and then left. In 1715 the French East India Company claimed Mauritius for France and established the colony. The British invaded and took over in 1810.

At school we learnt everything in French. At high school we shifted to English (mainly taught by Irish Jesuits, in my case) which was hard for a Francophile. My only talent and passion was in the arts. My first job, for three years, was as a cartoonist, photographer, and journalist in a local daily paper. I had already started exhibiting, winning prizes, and having solo shows in Mauritius and Reunion Island. At twenty one I took a cargo boat around the Cape of Good Hope on my way to London. Art education was at its best there, more avant-garde than the rest of Europe. That was 1961.

Notting Hill Gate was to be my base for another twenty two years. I gradually travelled around Britain and the rest of Europe, with longer periods in Belgium and France. Soon I found I had a foot in both cultures—I felt at home in 'la perfide Albion' and 'naughty France'. The countryside became familiar on both sides of the Channel from the north of Britain to the south of France. Chauvinism had faded away a long time ago. After a month or so in France, in my dreams people spoke French, then English, and vice versa. Since I was teaching art part time, holidays would be spent in Spain and Morocco, Italy, Greece, or Turkey, later on America and finally Asia and Australia.

I visited Australia in 1982 and gave a few lectures at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, UNSW College of Fine Arts, and at tertiary institutions in Brisbane. I had been enticed by Clive James



after seeing the television programme of his first visit back home—the bird's-eye view of Sydney's Harbour and the Opera House certainly had the wow factor! I had followed his reviews in Britain for years, and on the plane to Sydney I read *My Unreliable Memoirs*.

Apart from studying with Barbara Hanrahan at the Central School of Art in the early '60s (and being one of the characters in her book *Michael and Me and the Sun*, later on), as students we discovered Sidney Nolan and Brett Whitely and other Australian artists from both cultures, by visiting their sometime first shows in London. Later on there was a wave of late '70s and early '80s Australian films which had hit the capital. But basically I knew not much else of this island continent.

In 1983 on April Fool's Day, I moved to Sydney. Since then I have traveled the east coast from the Daintree Forest to Tasmania. But I yet have to discover the Outback—having only flown over it numerous times (those Nolan landscapes again). Since I have been here for 27 years, I have inevitably absorbed some of the local cultures. Apart from Tasmania, the landscape is so drastically

different. A wilderness, an emptiness, and a vastness that is part of its beauty. I can't help but be in awe of the Aboriginals who have survived and prosper physically in some of the land's most inhospitable environments. I also empathise with the way such people live with a foot in both cultures. In this way it reminds me of my own experience of growing up deracinated from a French background and spending nearly half a century in Anglo-Saxon countries. Having a foot in two cultures broadens and enriches one's experiences and understanding of the world. It had been my choice to spend most of my life in English-speaking countries.

'Strangers on the Shore' (1995–96)

But let's go back to the Phillips Fox painting. It is so beautifully constructed, from Captain Cook (the painting is about him after all), a majestic figure with his controlling gesture to the soldiers aiming at the two Aboriginal figures, as if to say: 'don't shoot!' The seamen are ready with their guns or at work securing the lifeboat from the *Endeavour*. At the edge, Banks the botanist is slightly alarmed at this turn of events. No wonder this fictitious arrangement has become engraved in the nation's subconscious.

Then I wanted to reinterpret it. Alter its meaning in subtle ways, and leave the viewer to decipher them. 'Strangers on the Shore' became the first of three related works I eventually painted. The idea

Jacques Charoux, 'Strangers on the Shore', 1995–96, Wollongong City Gallery (1998.034); 'Colours Dreaming', 1996, Wollongong City Gallery (1998.035); 'Real Estate', 1996, Wollongong City Gallery (2008.004).



was to repaint it as a negative, which would invest the picture with new layers of meaning. The bright blue and cloudy sky metamorphoses ominously to a dark and threatening space. On the right, in the distance, the two Aboriginal silhouettes also turned into ghostly ephemeral figures—or are they ‘Mimis’ from their own Aboriginal culture?

*‘How would the two Aboriginals
have seen this intrusion?’*

Through the slow process of painting, one’s imagination also wonders: ‘How would the two Aboriginals have seen this intrusion?’ These pale creatures invading could have been ghosts, or even worse, from the moon! After all the Aboriginal watchers would not have seen such accoutrement and colours ever before. Thus came to mind my title.

‘Colours Dreaming’ (1996)

The second artwork—at this stage I was thinking of a diptych—was already on my mind by the time I finished ‘Strangers’. Basically I wanted an amalgam of two different texts covering the whole picture; each representing the two cultures cruelly juxtaposed and intertwined. The use of another negative picture, this time on photo-sensitized canvas, would enhance the pale grey lettering that I wanted to use.

The next step would be to find the appropriate texts, which would be relevant and characteristic of both cultures. After settling on Shakespeare—for obvious reasons—I came across David Gulpilil’s two volumes of children’s stories based on Yolngu beliefs which convey his reverence for the landscape, people, and traditional culture of his homeland. And finally I found the appropriate passage in *The Birirrk*.

Now I had to find a needle in the haystack. I wanted a Shakespearean text that talked about the landscape and its people. After days of looking I came across the perfect passage from *King Richard the II*. Eleven lines of pure poetry from the Elizabethan era and historically taking place in England and Wales. Extraordinarily, part of this quotation could also have been applicable to this island continent of Australia today. My choice was made. What was left to do was the spacing, so that the writing would cover the whole canvas evenly.

This royal throne of Kings, this scepter’d isle,
On this earth, the Birirrk ‘Spirit’ said, ‘look at the
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars
colours’. They showed us the red that came
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
from the blood of their fighting and
This fortress built by Nature for herself
hunting, the secret white pipe clay that is

Against infection and the hand of war,
kept by a giant kangaroo, the yellow that
 This happy breed of men, this little world
marks the cliffs of our land and is the sacred
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
colour of the Yirritja, and the black that
 which serves it in the office of a wall
they made with the great fire they used to shape us.

Or as a mote defensive to a house,
They showed us the charcoal from the fires
 Against the envy of less happier lands,
of their great Dreaming tracks and told us,
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.
'With these colours you can keep the Dreaming.'

Going through that slow process I realised that the Australian text contained four colours and the English one ('silver sea', or metal and sword). So I decided to add the five colours at the bottom of the work, with silver strategically and symmetrically placed in the middle. But instead of using paint I chose an adhesive with the pigments to go on top, in accordance with a long-established Aboriginal practice. But are the colours themselves characteristic of these two nations, the silver of the sophisticated weapon or dagger, and the black, red, white, and yellow of burnt wood, blood, clay, and sandy cliffs? The last line of the text was perfectly suited. So I called the work 'Colours Dreaming', with its Aboriginal resonance.

'Real Estate' (1996)

Through the process of painting 'Colours Dreaming', the idea of doing a triptych emerged. But I now see the finished triptych more as a trilogy, a group of three related stories, or tragedies, each one with its own identity—three different yet complementary statements. For the third painting I thought a positive would be more suited as a counter balance to the other two negatives. And wanting to analyse its structure or composition, I kept overlaying black lines on the picture—and the next day changing them again.

Phillips Fox was among 'Australia's most gifted colourist and figure painters', wrote his biographer in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. 'Celebrated for his painting of sunlight effects, he combined Impressionist-oriented vision with an academic training. Apart from portraits and

landscapes he mainly painted elegant female figures and family groups; his repertoire extended to market and Arab scenes and rural subjects.' So he was well suited to be the painter of choice to depict such a scene. In 1900 he was given a commission (under the Gilbee bequest) to paint a historic picture for the National Gallery of Victoria. A condition was that the picture had to be painted overseas. Fox accordingly left for London in 1901.

He certainly had studied the dynamics of group figures created by the great classical masters. The rapport and movement of the characters in this painting infuse it with energy and purposefulness. As I dissected it, the compositional lines eventually seemed to converge on one area: a circular idyllic vision of a landscape. Was I imaging this or was it Phillips Fox's subliminal intention? After all was not it the purpose of Britain to actually discover new pastures, new land to colonise, since America was fighting for its independence (which it was to obtain six years after Cook landed at Botany Bay).

*the compositional lines eventually
 seemed to converge on one area:
 a circular idyllic vision of a
 landscape*

Once I had understood the statement, the execution was swift compared to the two earlier paintings. Here both identity and cultures clash. The mercantilism of the modern world where everything has a price tag, can be bought and preferably fenced; as opposed to the timeless approach of the Aboriginal culture, where the land is not just territory but the soul, the self, and above all, ancestral. The connection is spiritual, mystical. The tragedy is the near impossibility of reconciliation. Without judging or being negative, one can feel the cruelty of an almost insoluble dilemma.

Today, isn't it still the dream of 'this happy breed of men' (to quote Shakespeare), to own their individual parcel of land preferably as close to the littoral as possible?

Artist **Jacques Charoux** works from Thirroul, New South Wales—an archive of his work can be found at www.jacquescharoux.com.au

Writing and reflecting

Glen Wilson

With the forthcoming publication of Glen Wilson's book *Landscaping for Australia* we invited the author to reflect on the place of writing amidst a long and rich career.

I'm 83 today [13 September 2010] and started my landscape career when I was 25. Previous to that I was a qualified toolmaker (after a five-year apprenticeship) and had worked with one of the largest printing firms in Melbourne as assistant factory manager. But Australian plants have been the focus for my profession life and so my career as a landscape designer, lecturer, and writer has spanned over fifty years.

*although still 'green' myself,
I had the temerity to go into print*

Fortunately my early writings about landscaping and the garden use of Australian plants found ready publishers. During 1958 I wrote three articles that were published by the now-defunct *Australian Garden Lover* magazine. I'm not sure how I made the approach. Perhaps I selected the *Garden Lover* thinking that the *Your Garden* would not bother printing the work of an unknown—the *Garden Lover* was all black and white and thus less prestigious. One of the readers of those early articles became a very good client and friend. These articles were prompted by the way some of the earliest enthusiasts for native plants treated them as rare specimens and some even rowed out their plants like a crop of beans! My eyes had been cleared by the display garden at the nursery of Bernhardt and Dulcie Schubert in Noble Park, in Melbourne's south-east, where the planting had been inspired by the bush. It was mass planted with trees and shrubs with open spaces for access rather than pathways. And, although still 'green' myself, I had the temerity to go into print.

Along with Boddy's of Geelong, the Schuberts took the risk of setting up nurseries to produce only Australian plants and they both made a success of it—the Schuberts at Noble Park after starting nearby at Oakleigh in their backyard.

As people, they were the sort of folk who would help anyone if need be. Bernhardt and Dulcie were knowledgeable and generous spirited, as well as modest and quiet by nature. I did sketches for the covers of their catalogues and also contributed notes on landscaping with native plants. At this time I also contributed a short essay for the booklet *Native Plants and Seaside Gardens* published by the Beaumaris Tree Preservation Society.

Through the Schuberts I heard that Edna Walling was looking for some paying students. She interviewed me and looked over some of my drawings, which must have seemed crude compared to her wondrous draughting technique. She took me on as a student on the basis of a pound for each weekly lesson, which was a bit of a strain in those days (about 1958–59), but well worthwhile. Then she began involving me with some of her jobs, mainly planting as she had reached her 'native' era. (Some people hankered for the old days, 'When Edna was doing her good work', Eric Hammond said to me once, 'before she went native'!) He had constructed most of her celebrated gardens, including many of those illustrated in her books.

Eric Hammond and Edna Walling had great respect for one another, although she had some doubts about him as a designer. Certainly I found his garden designs inspired by her work—that he knew so well. Hammond was highly offended when Walling suggested that he should employ me as a designer—she thought of him mainly as an excellent constructor. However I did eventually work for Hammonds for eight years. I gently eased myself into designing after joining the firm. Never was I asked by Eric Hammond to design anything—I just 'grew' into that, as I also became accepted by the fellows on the job as one of 'the bosses', although I had never been given a title or any authority. It came about by my ability



Top and left: This pair of illustrations—reverse views of the same garden—was published in 1962 to accompany Glen Wilson's series 'Home landscaping with natives', at that date an uncommon inclusion in a mainstream Australian gardening magazine. [Reproduced from *Your Garden*, May 1962, pp.19, 21.]

Opposite: The naturalistic aesthetic of the bush garden (achieved here with the 'Schubert method' of planting in a thick layer of sawdust) was highly unorthodox in most Australian suburban situations until the 1960s and 1970s. [Reproduced from Glen Wilson, *Landscaping with Australian Plants* (1975), p.43.]

in the office and with 'the men'. Eric Hammond and I looked after general landscaping and private clients, architects, and the like, whilst son Bob (who died only recently) was our specialist with playing fields, running tracks, tennis courts, and trained one of our foremen to specialise in this work.

After my long 'education' with the E.H. Hammond firm, where I eventually became 'a front man' interviewing clients, a designer, an estimator, and supervisor, I was inducted into the newly formed Australian Institute of Landscape Architects by my submission of a large bundle of drawings, since lost. Eric Hammond and I had

attended all the meetings in Melbourne to discuss the formation of a professional body and some years ago I was honoured with a Life Fellowship of the AILA.

About 1970 I moved from Hammond's to a development company that had their thumb on land at Point Cook, south west of Melbourne. The two yanks behind it proved to be con men, although I did set up a sizeable nursery of Australian trees to supply the development. Donald Cameron Consultants were in the early stages of a proposal for Patterson Lakes development and they snapped up the plant stock from Point Cook—and me, when the whole con job crashed.



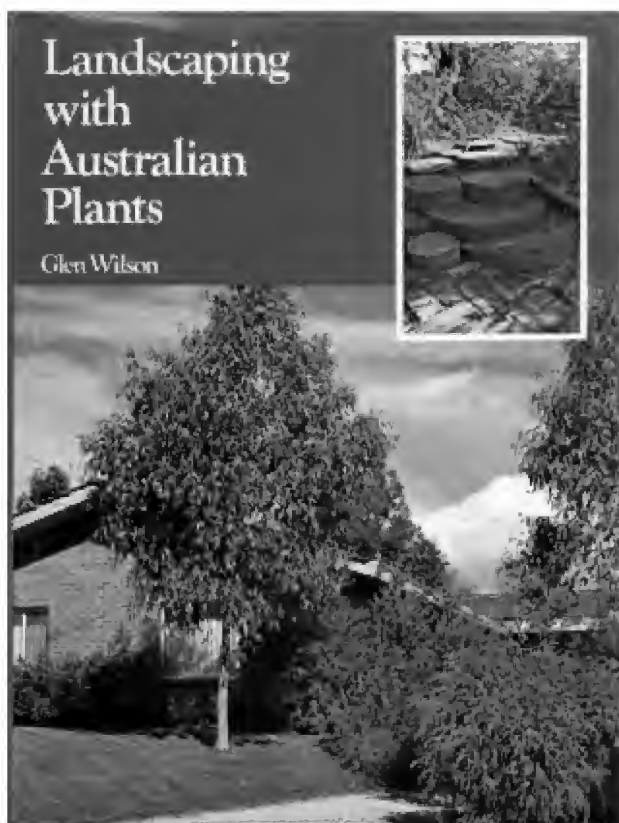
Whilst setting up a nursery for Patterson Lakes, my colleague Ron Rayment phoned me with the news that the publishers Nelson were looking for someone to write a book about native gardens, and I quickly made an appointment to see them. They didn't hesitate in signing me up after our first interview, no doubt because of my previous published articles. Perhaps Nelson's wanted to compete with the new book by Ellis Stones, *Australian Garden Design*, published by Macmillan in 1971 although I never heard it mentioned by them. The lovely books of Maloney and Walker may also have set them going—I've no idea.

*the publishers Nelson were
looking for someone to write a
book about native gardens*

I soon signed a contract and although working long hours, and with a staff of up to eight to organise, I wrote *Landscaping with Australian Plants* in about four months. Nelson's wanted it titled *Gardening with Australian Plants* but I could not agree.

They seemed very 'gardening' oriented and 'landscaping' seemed to them to be something foreign or removed from the concept of gardening. We started out on different planes but I felt they were pleased with the final product. I certainly went my own way, with any differences that had cropped up at their end sorted out over lunch one day.

About the time I completed *Landscaping with Australian Plants*, Patterson Lakes was hit with the 1974 recession and we couldn't sell land—our only income. At the Christmas break-up party, Don Cameron, the Managing Director of the Patterson Lakes Partnership, quietly told the senior staff that those of us who could find a suitable job should take it. I applied for a lectureship at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now the University of Canberra) and a landscape architectural position with the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation. I was offered both jobs—landscape architects were a bit thin on the ground then—but elected to teach, as I had been doing part time at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in its Graduate Diploma course in landscape architecture. (I had taken over from Ellis Stones.)



At my interview at the CCAE I submitted the galley proofs of *Landscaping with Australian Plants*, which was published by Nelson in 1975. As I was not a graduate, the principal was called in to the interview. If he let me in, he said, 'smart young blokes would soon be snapping at my arse'. Sam Richardson was a very coarse man. However, as they were desperate, the head of landscape architecture, Rex Fairbrother (yes, the younger brother of the famous Nan Fairbrother), on the walk to the taxi, told me the job was mine and I stayed until 1982.

Whilst at the College, Ralph Neale phoned me to say he was starting a landscape journal—*Landscape Australia*—and would I write an article for the first edition. I did so quite quickly and 'Towards an Australian style of landscape design' was published in 1979. Later Ralph asked Rodger Elliot and me to write a series, 'Planting design using Australian species', published during 1983 and 1984. This finally became eight articles in all—I contributed the sections on 'Planting design' and Rodger the 'Species information' on the key plants under discussion.

Very few readers have perhaps seen my book *Amenity Planting in Arid Zones* (1980). This 450-page volume of text, photographs, and sketches was my study leave report after my six months in the Negev desert of Israel studying desert landscaping. I was aware that, with Australia's

vast deserts and dry lands, scarcely anyone knew anything about landscaping in such conditions (as apart from 'gardening'). I can't remember how I came to hear that the Israelis were doing great things in the Negev Desert but I was given a name to contact. Finally I was invited to study at the Applied Research Institute of the Research and Development Authority at Ben-Gurion University of Negev, provided I would be financially independent.

Amenity Planting in Arid Zones was published and printed at the CCAE. No one but me had anything to do with the format or design of the book. This work was submitted with my application for promotion, but virtually ignored. When Roger Johnson, my Head of School said we should order a reprinting, I refused because of the way I had been treated, so the book is now a collectable. It is interesting that two staff members of our School (Environmental Design), one a senior lecturer, the other a principal lecturer, both with Masters Degrees from English universities, said in their opinion my desert book was at least a master's thesis.

*Landscaping for Australia
will be the culmination of
a fifty-year career*

Apart from the books and magazine articles mentioned above, I have also contributed notes on landscaping with Australian plants to the *Melbourne Age*. My new book, *Landscaping for Australia*, is now in publication. The theme is landscaping in an Australian character using native vegetation. I hope the work may inspire home gardeners, students of landscape design, and all professional and amateurs who are interested in tree planting. The intention is not to make the work into a 'picture book' of Australian plants, but rather to include a large number of photographs that provide visual lessons (in tandem with the text). The colour images are from a mixture of negatives, slides and digital prints I've taken over the years. The 'real' photographs are from my trusty Minolta cameras and a few even from my Petri rangefinder camera which has a superb lens and has been in my possession since the 1950s. *Landscaping for Australia* will be the culmination of a fifty-year career.

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For further reading see Suzanne Hunt, 'Landscapes with an Australian character: the work of Glen Wilson', *Australian Garden History*, 13 (6), May/June 2002, pp.17–20. Publication details of *Landscaping for Australia* will be included in *Australian Garden History* when the book is in press.

Gardens lost and found

Richard Heathcote

With the opening in Adelaide during mid-October of two complementary exhibitions—'The Garden of Ideas' and 'Lost Gardens of Adelaide'—Carrick Hill's director ponders the nature of loss and opportunity in our garden heritage.

Looking for lost gardens

Where do lost gardens go when they vanish from the face of the earth? Where can they be found after their loss and are they retrievable? I found myself asking these and similar questions whilst preparing a paper for the 2006 Annual National Conference of the Australian Garden History Society. Held in Adelaide that year, my purpose was to establish the authorship of the garden at Carrick Hill—the property I manage—commenced in 1936 by Ursula Hayward who together with her husband created this fine hillside property.

Detective work on garden design attribution requires a mixture of scientific enquiry, investigative journalism, and intuitive pursuit of the hunch. It was great fun and Ursula—with all her complex influences—emerged as the author and creative force behind the garden. One unpalatable fact concerned the farmhouse and Mitcham dairy buildings that had existed on the site of Carrick Hill since the 1880s but demolished by the state government on receiving the Haywards' bequest in 1983. This agricultural use of the land, with remnant fruit trees surrounding the farmhouse and dairy buildings, stood as a reminder to the progression of land use around most Australian cities in the mid-twentieth century.

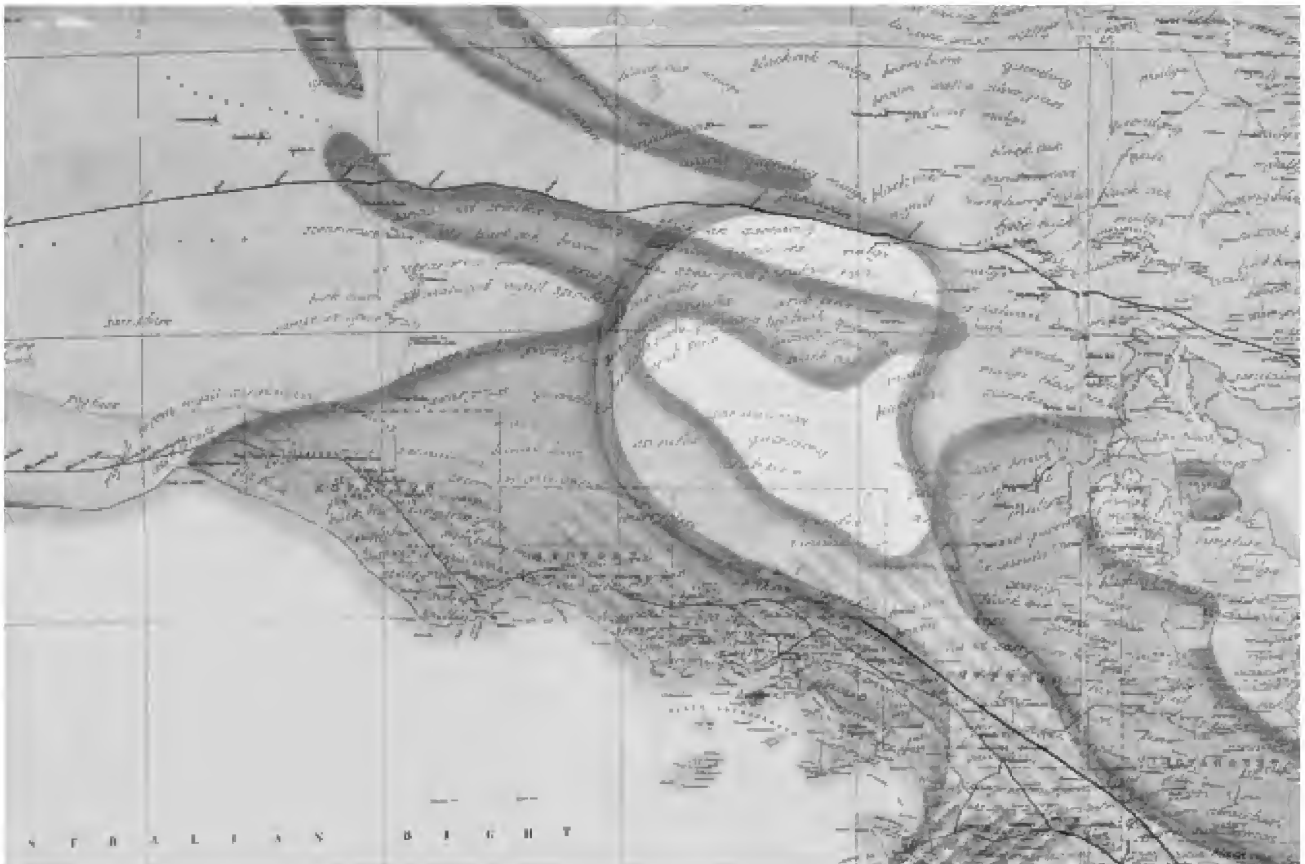
Gardens comprise many elements, including siting within the landscape, overall layout, structures, plantings, and stylistic design. More ephemeral are the uses to which the garden was put and events that have occurred in that place. Through memory and imagination gardens can take us to places in the mind, they touch on the work of artists, and frequently they silently inhabit documentary repositories such as libraries and archives. Much can also be retrieved of the experiences enjoyed by owners and visitors through family photograph albums and oral traditions.

Our knowledge of Australian gardens is bolstered by the framework provided by references such as *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (2002) and the many detailed studies that have been undertaken. In the South Australian context, this is especially true of the research and writings of Robert Swinbourne and his pioneering research in *Years of Endeavour* (1982) and David Jones in his many articles. The focus on loss has been more recently examined in the exhibition and book *Lost Gardens of Sydney* (2008) by Colleen Morris and for South Australia in Swinbourne's *Gardens Lost* (2006).

Returning to my research on Ursula Hayward, her work in the creation of her garden seemed imbued with a sense of optimism and opportunity. There was little gnashing of teeth at the loss of farmland, much less the loss of potentially remnant pre-European vegetation. But then landscapes and especially gardens are dynamic, always in a state of change during their lifetimes, dependant on those who tend them to sustain their form and plantings and constantly adjusting to climate and whims of the owners. So too gardens will ultimately pass into memory, leaving just records and memories, tangible and intangible. Further reflection on my garden research revealed just how connected loss and opportunity are in our South Australian—and especially Adelaidean—history of gardens and gardening.

Taming the Plains

Perhaps all landscapes are like palimpsests, a surface scratched out and written over again and again—an ever-changing manuscript documenting layers of change. Certainly cycles of fire, drought, and natural disease have played their roles in shaping South Australia, to say nothing of the impact wrought by European settlers, endeavouring to force their will on the landscape.



State Records of South Australia (GRG 35/585/11)

Pioneering geographic surveys of South Australia's soils and vegetation were carried out during the 1920s and 1930s. This plan of 1928, reconstructing the principal vegetation at the date of European colonisation (1836), is rendered with lyrical beauty, perhaps betraying an unwitting fusion of science and art.

European colonisation of South Australia, with its introduction of the surveyor's line and grid, profoundly changed notions of land ownership and management. The indigenous vegetation was shown demonstratively on a Lands Department plan of 1928, providing much detail of what could be regarded as the first garden of plants managed by local Indigenous peoples.

Yet just as the surveyor's grid changed and in many cases destroyed Indigenous traditions, so it ushered in a new era of garden-making. Many of these early attempts were gardens of the mind and memory, relying on familiar plants, places, and pleasures to create a new home. Any loss of physical pleasure of original models was compensated in some small way by the new beginnings. For Adelaide, the survey grid of the late 1830s took two principal forms—city allotments of orderly mien and surrounded by park lands, and larger suburban blocks which marched out from the centre with geometric precision. Once land was surveyed and sold, garden-making proceeded apace.

Introduction of exotic plants

But where did the stocks of plants that began that first sequence of changes come from? George

Stevenson was one who played a pioneering role. Secretary to Governor Hindmarsh, he was also a journalist, editing the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* from its inception in 1836 until 1842. More than that, he was an ardent horticulturist and quickly set up his residence in North Adelaide where, after engaging Scottish-trained gardener George McEwin, he set about establishing a substantial garden and nursery, known as Melbourne Cottage, growing both ornamental and economic plants. He commissioned McEwin to write the *South Australian Vignerons and Gardener's Manual* (1843), the earliest gardening book for the colony.

The operation of a nursery on this site ceased in the early 1880s—although portion survived as a market garden, gone were the five hundred or so varieties of plants listed in the *Catalogue of Plants introduced into South Australia by George Stevenson Esq. and grown at Melbourne Cottage* (1843). The gardener's cottage (known as Buffalo Cottage) still survives but the grounds are reduced to a small block and the olive which first fruited here in the new colony—according to the *South Australian Register* (12 August 1843)—no longer grows. Here then is our first form of loss where the garden has ceased to exist but a



Nurseries—such as the Clifton Nursery of Edwin Smith at Walkerville shown here in the early 1890s—well demonstrate two key forms of gardening heritage and its loss. The first is the ebb and flow of plants whose preferences constitute such a vital stylistic marker in garden-making. The second is the physical layout and makeup of the nursery garden, so much at the mercy of the real estate market.

dwelling of the era remains. Records of the plants, including ornamentals and fruit trees, though, are documented through such primary sources such as newspaper advertisements and Stevenson's remarkable 1843 catalogue.

Other links flowed from this influential individual, labeled in his obituary as the 'Father of Horticulture in South Australia'. In 1842 he had founded Leawood Gardens nursery in the Adelaide Hills, the lease of which Edwin Smith acquired in 1874 for more tender plant stock. Trained in Ipswich, Suffolk, Smith also traded from the Clifton Nursery at Walkerville (which had been established by C.M. Ware in 1851), close to the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Swinbourne makes it clear that Clifton Nursery was one of Adelaide's pioneering nurseries, and Smith amongst the most experienced of local nursery proprietors.

The role of nurseries in shaping planting preferences was critical. Plant preferences were sometimes dictated by the passing whims of fashion, often by wider stylistic change, and frequently—exemplified

by the opinions of Edwin Smith—governed by tradition. Loss came quickly as particular fashions and fascinations ebbed and flowed, and nurseries followed suit by deleting 'novelties' from their catalogues. At a wider level, external circumstances such as the introduction of water reticulation to Adelaide in the 1870s (or more recently, as the impacts of climate change are being monitored) also caused loss and opportunity. Whereas Adelaide's early colonists had struggled with a lack of water, reticulated supplies boosted horticulture during the boom years of the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Today most of these early nurseries are physically lost although records of plants and grounds exist in catalogues, newspaper descriptions, and the occasional engraving, photograph, or plan. Smith's Clifton Nursery, for example, was subdivided soon after the end of the World War One. Contemporary nurseries are not immune from these issues and now face the same problems of land use versus real estate value as they seek sites for their enterprises further and further towards the outskirts of the metropolis.

Prosperity and grand cultivation

Prosperity from the South Australian mining boom of the 1840s brought grand cultivation to areas outside the city blocks of Adelaide. J.B. Graham was a remarkable character who arrived in the colony in 1838 and worked initially as an ironmonger's shop assistant. He later owned the store and sold it to acquire shares that gave him a one-sixth interest in the Burra copper mine and a seat on its board of directors. This provided a substantial income for the rest of his life. The lavish landscaping of Graham's fifty-two acre estate Prospect House, near the village of Prospect, certainly reflects this rapid rise to fortune. Developed from 1846, Graham departed Australia in 1848. In a series of watercolours commissioned from artist S.T. Gill (dated 1850) we see the desire to reflect in the garden symbols of taste and style that affluence could afford. Sold by Graham in 1853 and largely subdivided by the early twentieth century, this is a prime illustration of a once-grand estate dwindling into suburbia.

The prosperity that propelled the development of grand estate gardens was heavily dependent on the provision of plants from a flourishing local nursery

trade. The rapid introduction of exotic plants closely followed subdivision of the Adelaide plains and the consequent creation of gardens. Prosperity and propagation went hand in hand. The significance of this plant supply is clearly seen in the images by Gill (Prospect House) and Tibbits (Eynesbury House—see following pages). The cycles of fashion and style created a marvelous pool of gardens—both representative of popular styles and demonstrating exceptional virtuosity (as in the garden of Prospect House). The subsequent loss of characteristic planting styles highlights the importance of nurseries and particularly of their surviving catalogues in documenting this record, as Robert Swinbourne has shown for South Australia.

Many of these grand estates were subdivided, and yet others were reworked in newer styles, one of the opportunities grasped by horticulturists such as Adelaide doctor Robert Pulleine. At his property Netherby, Victorian-era flower beds were replaced in the 1920s by cacti and other succulents. Older styles were replaced by newer hybrid ones creating a dramatic new aesthetic (see our next issue for a feature on Pulleine and his garden at Netherby).



S.T. Gill, 'Prospect House, the seat of J.B. Graham, Esqr., near Adelaide, S^o Australia', watercolour, gouache, and pen and black ink on paper, mounted on linen, 1850. This painting (and its suite of four complementary views) clearly demonstrates the significance of the visual record—particularly in the nineteenth century—of paintings, sketches, and photographs as documentation of our lost gardens.

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (0.1345), Gift of Mrs EM. Graham and family, 1947



Gardens change through the biophysical nature of their constituent plants and therefore 'arrest' (to quote English landscape architect Lawrence Fricker's memorable line)—grow it—are clearly evident in the perfection of Adelaide's Eynesbury House (Belair Road, K



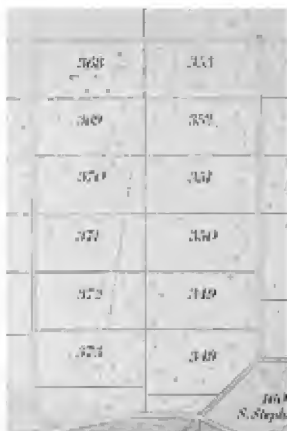
re without the required maintenance—to keep sites in 'a preferred state of ecological
 with and loss is inevitable. The implications of adequate maintenance—or lack of
 ingswood), painted by William Tibbits (c.1897), and Prospect House.

1836/1928



State Records of South Australia (GRG 35/585/11)

1839



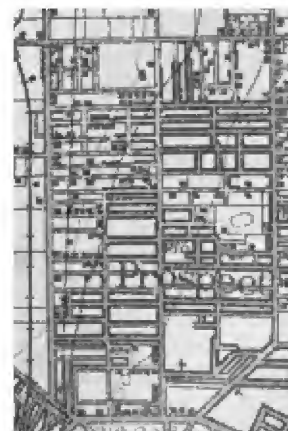
State Library of South Australia (C72/2)

1889



State Records of South Australia (GRG 35/585/37)

1914



Private collection

In tracing loss, maps and plans form significant documentation, demonstrated by this sequence which show change over time in Prospect abutting the park lands of North Adelaide. The corresponding details are from a plan of vegetation at the time of European colonisation (1836; mapped in 1928); 'The District of Adelaide, South Australia, as divided into country sections; from the trigonometrical surveys of Colonel Light, late Surv. Genl.' (1839); a 'Military Map' of Adelaide (1889), and the inch to a mile map of Adelaide (1914) compiled as part of the first Military Survey of Australia by the Department of Defence.

Solidified suburbs and changing uses

Gardens lost through changing fashions for plants and plantings provide many casualties, but even more potent was the acceleration of suburbanisation. By the late nineteenth century, as the city's population swelled, the villages surrounding Adelaide began to encroach on one another to become connected suburbs. Large houses and their gardens which had previously stood alone found themselves with neighbours over the fence where before there were paddocks. Prospect House and its wondrous garden was just one example of this march of progress.

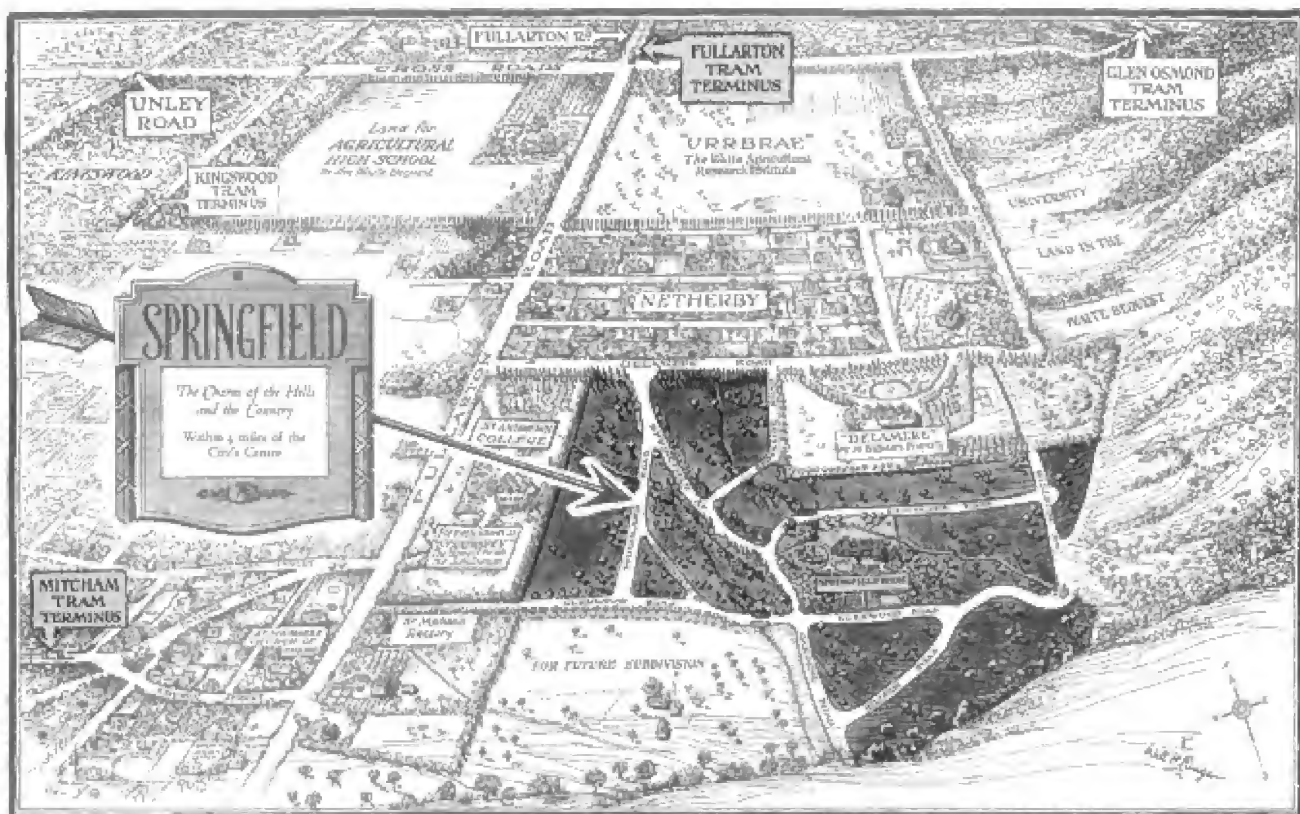
Outer suburban localities were surveyed from larger blocks while inner areas were further subdivided. Carrick Hill stands representative of the former, while Smith's Clifton Nursery at Walkerville exemplified the latter fate. Often the principal residence was left on a much reduced block but typically gardens were destroyed, apart from isolated mature trees. Garden usage also changed dramatically in response to changing social and technological innovation—the advent of motor cars and the rise of convenience shopping to name just two. In particular the effect of changed uses of large domestic gardens hastened much loss of this precious heritage.

Public open space holds many ironies in South Australia after the promising start of a city surrounded by park lands. Adelaide today has a disproportionately low ratio of open space per capita in an Australian context. And grand though the park lands are, it took until 1916 for a new ring of park

lands to be suggested, with town planner Charles Reade's scheme showing 'possibilities of outer belt of park lands and parkway boulevards', a second green belt of parks and open spaces to balance the rapidly expanding city. Reade's other great contribution was the closer subdivision of the Mitcham Garden Suburb (Colonel Light Gardens). Here farmlands were turned into a suburb between the villages south of Adelaide, but in the highly developed social philosophy of the scheme recipients of these new style homes were expected to conform to a planned use of the garden. Utilities such as vegetable growing, a place for children to play, and laundry drying were guided by booklets advising how this could be achieved for maximum benefit. Today the houses of Colonel Light Gardens remain on their original block sizes but attitudes to gardening and the presumption that contemporary owners would conform to a gardening use and philosophy are less sure than when originally planned. The social hub of this suburban community was croquet, lawn tennis, and bowls clubs, all of which struggle currently to sustain memberships. And yet, many owners do acknowledge and sustain gardens faithful to the original concept for suburban living, and vegetable growing is re-entering family activities through current garden promotions. What's old is new again—not lost but found again.

Opportunity versus loss

Gardens of the mind and memory have been previously mentioned as a form of loss, where the physical pleasure must be substituted or exchanged for mental gratification. Other forms of loss fall



Carrick Hill Historic Home and Garden

Springfield: the charm of the hills and the country: real estate brochure showing the land on which Carrick Hill now sits prior to sale (marked 'For future subdivision').

into this nebulous category—gardens that were never executed, for whatever reason, which only exist as imaginings, ideas, schemes, proposals, or competition entries. In Reade's green belt we have a plan not executed, a loss that can be used to trigger debate about the twenty-first century approaches to humanising the burgeoning city.

Gardeners generally are practical people in that they work with nature to make and sustain their creations. The vicissitudes of this passion hardens them to loss since the natural world has little time for sentiment. In fact loss is often seen as an opportunity for new endeavours with planting preferences and garden styles. Loss of significant heritage is indeed of concern, and we should be doing our utmost to conserve both representative and exceptional examples. Yet loss does not need to be viewed in an entirely negative light where gardens are concerned. It can provoke enquiry and investigation which expands our knowledge and encourages imagination for contemporary garden making. Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement or more recent bush gardens would not have been possible without the loss of earlier landscapes or subdivided garden estates.

These thoughts about loss versus opportunity have informed the current exhibition 'Lost Gardens of

Adelaide'. One of the bonuses of exhibitions such as this, and Colleen Morris's 'Lost Gardens of Sydney', is the uncovering of previously lost images (such as the Tibbits' painting of Eynesbury), the highlighting of gardens at risk, and the showcasing of Australia's significant garden heritage. Far from being trapped in nostalgia, examining loss provides a positive impulse to investigate, and reinforces our need to heed past efforts in making and sustaining gardens for our use and enjoyment.

Richard Heathcote is Director of Carrick Hill Historic House and Garden, at Springfield in Adelaide's foothills. The exhibition 'Lost Gardens of Adelaide' is on show at Carrick Hill from 14 October 2010 until 27 February 2011. Normal entry charges apply—see www.carrickhill.sa.gov.au.

Grateful acknowledgement for assistance with the preparation of this article is made to Cas Middlemis, Cate Parkinson, and Robert Swinbourne, and to the South Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society for its sponsorship of the 'Lost Gardens of Adelaide' exhibition.

South Eastern Australian Recent Climate History

<http://climatehistory.com.au/>

This landmark project, spanning the sciences and humanities, draws together a team of leading climate scientists, water managers, and historians to better understand south-eastern Australian climate history over the past 200–500 years. It is the first study of its kind in Australia. The project is being led by researchers from The University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences. The aim is to investigate south-eastern Australia's climate history using the following sources:

- Palaeoclimate records—tree rings, coral, ice cores, and cave deposits;
- Documentary records—newspaper records, governors' records, and early settler accounts; and
- Early weather data—weather journals, government gazettes, and pre-Federation observatories.

These records will allow the SEARCH project team to reconstruct past climate conditions (rainfall, temperature, and atmospheric pressure) and see how climate variability has influenced Australian society over time. This will in turn assist in helping place current climate change patterns in an historical context.

The SEARCH project links partners from around Australia and internationally, including the Bureau of Meteorology (Australian Government), Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment (Victorian Government), Melbourne Water, Met Office, NIWA Taihoro Nukurangi; the National Library of Australia, State Library of New South Wales, State Library of Victoria and other libraries through the National & State Libraries Australia network, and the Powerhouse Museum; and The University of Melbourne, University of Exeter, and Monash University.

Most of our knowledge about Australia's climate relies on records kept over the past 100 years. Few people realise what an amazing amount of information about our climatic past is recorded in explorers' log books, official correspondence, early settlers' diaries, newspapers, and the works of eighteenth and nineteenth century scholars, all produced before modern meteorological observations began. Until now, they have been largely unexplored for climate

information. Scientists and historians will be analysing a wealth of documentary records, unearthing fascinating stories about Australia's weather variations throughout history. In combination with the palaeoclimate data and early weather records, these documents will help to piece together a picture of Australia's climate since first European settlement in 1788. Most importantly, the documentary records will enable us to better understand how natural variations and extreme weather events affected Australian societies over time.

There are a number of ways you can get involved in the SEARCH project. The project needs research volunteers to help collate documentary records and early weather data. Volunteers can easily work from home on a vast array of online digitised records provided by library project partners. Volunteers would have an opportunity to explore fascinating historical records and collections such as early newspapers, images, correspondence and accounts from early settlers, and accounts of colonial scholars. Volunteers might also register their interest in working on original historical documents that have not been digitised and are only available in the collections of our library partners. National Library of Australia volunteers working on the Trove Australian Newspapers project can also help the SEARCH project by tagging articles relevant to climate history. More details are available through the SEARCH website. The SEARCH project team welcomes questions at info@climatehistory.com.au.



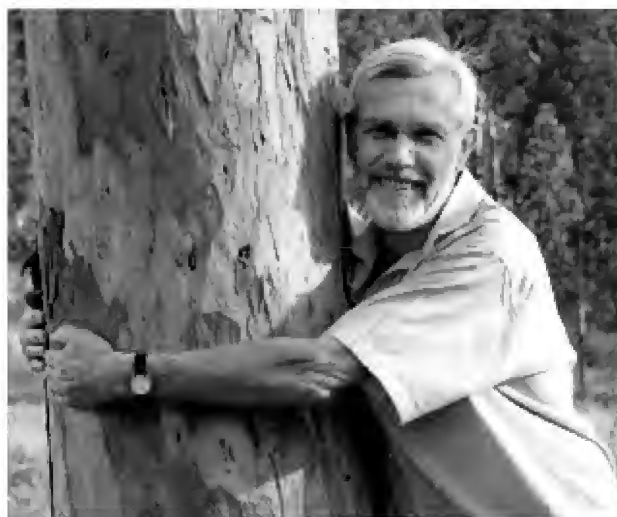
Profile: John Taylor

My work in the world of gardens has been mostly management, of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Brisbane's parks and gardens. So I have spent much time worrying about budgets, capital works and contracts, politicians and interest groups, staff and unions, droughts and emergencies, meetings (constant), and the management fads that the bureaucracy was following at the time.

All this effort was directed towards delighting visitors to these public parks and gardens, meeting their needs, giving them value for the taxes they had paid, and keeping them safe. But there was a bigger picture, above the day to day busyness, which is best captured in the word *stewardship*—understanding that for a time you had charge of important community assets, and it was your job to maintain and care for and improve them and hand them on to the next manager in better condition than they were when you took over. This *stewardship* recognised that while some areas provide opportunities for improvements in design and plantings and new community facilities, others contain landscapes created by an earlier generation of gardeners and designers, and that these landscapes are valued by the community for their heritage value and should not be 'improved'. I have directed several conservation studies and management plans of old gardens. Australia is fortunate to have the Burra Charter which sets out concepts and procedures for studying heritage places, determining what is significant about them, and defining conservation policies aimed at conserving the significant features.

Good clear conservation policies for heritage gardens and landscapes are very useful in providing direction for management and for preventing enthusiastic and well-meaning staff and politicians from building unsympathetic improvements. The policies also direct money and effort to maintenance and rejuvenation of significant features, while recognising that some elements have to be updated (toilets, kiosks) to ensure continuing community use, and thus community support.

My father was a gardener working in an English-style country estate, Roads End, at Berwick, east of Melbourne, with vegetable garden, orchard, and an expansive park. The first historic garden I worked in was at the forestry school at Creswick, in the Victorian goldfields. The school began in the old



hospital (1864) and the doctor's residence Tremearne House (1884), and has several hectares of old garden and impressive trees. I have happy memories of time spent in both these big old gardens. And forestry is not that far removed from gardening, and certainly has a strong *stewardship* ethic.

After stints at Melbourne and Oxford Universities, working at a variety of jobs and travelling in Australia, Europe, and China with my wife, cultural heritage expert Jane Lennon, I now have a love of the natural environment, especially the plants, and an appreciation of cultural landscapes, land that has been modified by human occupation. I am a restless gardener, I like changing the look and feel of the garden, and I have enjoyed all the new plants we could grow when we moved from Melbourne to Brisbane.

For the last 20 years of my professional life I was a manager and so I bring to the National Management Committee questions about whether the Australian Garden History Society is meeting its objectives, making best use of its resources, and responding to the changes—technological, cultural, economic—that are occurring in society. It seems to me that these changes are leading to greater development pressure on old gardens, public and private, and I believe that the Society should be more active in raising awareness within the community of the importance of historic gardens and landscapes and in advocating for the conservation of threatened gardens and landscapes. I fear that if we don't do this, in association with other conservation groups, the old gardens and landscapes that we love will disappear at an increasing rate.

Review essays: Gardens and ideas

'Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design', The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, 21 May to 12 September 2010.

Among the extraordinarily rich collections of New York's Morgan Library is a diverse group of art works and documents pertaining to garden history. With additional material loaned from institutions in the United States and Germany, the Morgan has mounted a wide ranging exhibition on the origins of the 'Romantic' garden. This somewhat slippery concept is covered in great detail in the accompanying exhibition catalogue (see *AGH*, 22 (1), 2010, pp.11, 28). It would be easy to argue with some of the assertions on the Romantic made in the catalogue, but the potted biographies of many protagonists of Romanticism and garden history are a useful guide for the viewer. Ironically this splendid exhibition is located in the intensely populated New York City, which must be high on the list of places without gardens (apart from Central Park, the designs of which are featured as part of the American section of the show).

The term Romanticism is usually paired with Classicism and seen as its opposite. This exhibition deals with 'romantic' tendencies from 1700 to 1900. Poets, painters, and musicians were all caught up in the movement. While the 'romantic' was seen as associative, the classical was thought to be based on formal values. Imagination, contemplation, and nature were ideas taken up by romantic artists. German and French writers, including Rousseau and Goethe, were key figures. Movements within Romanticism included the Sublime, in which man was portrayed as small and overwhelmed by the grandeur and terror of nature, and the Picturesque movement which included landscape painting and notions of Associationism. This complicated set of ideas led to a new approach to the landscape and gardens, particularly in England, where essays on travel through the landscape inspired a school of landscape painting and a new garden style in which the grand formal garden lost favour and the so-called natural garden became the rage.

Lifestyles of the rich and famous, business, trade, and national identity were all bound up in the development

of the 'natural' garden, forerunners of which begin this exhibition. During the tenure of the East India Company, Christian missionaries were sent to China. Some, such as Matteo Ripa were interested in Chinese architecture and gardens. In the early eighteenth century, at the request of the Emperor, Ripa made a series of etchings of Chinese imperial gardens at Jehol. On his return to England, a set of his etchings was acquired by Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington. Echoing earlier scholars, Ripa wrote on his dislike of the exclusion of nature from formal European gardens and praised the imitation of nature artfully constructed in Chinese gardens.

The plan of Alexander Pope's garden at Twickenham did not quite illustrate his nostrum 'When order in variety I see, But where tho all things differ all agree', but it included a secluded monument to his mother, a grotto, a wilderness garden, and a waterfall. Many artificial waterfalls were powered by machinery which did not always perform, leaving the stream embarrassingly dry. At London's Vauxhall Gardens, a bell rang to announce the flowing of the famous cascade. Pope designed the first artificial ruin, a Gothic folly, for the garden at Cirencester Park. Also on view is Pope's autograph manuscript of his Epistle on Taste, 'To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend, To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot, In all, let Nature never be forgot.'

English gardens are illustrated with a view of Strawberry Hill, which Horace Walpole rebuilt as



Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), 'Le Petit Parc', based on details drawn in Italy, gouache on vellum (c.1763), from the exhibition Romantic Gardens.

Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum

a Gothic castle, and views of a fascinating group of artificial caves, grottos, and hermit's cells. William Wrighte designed a hermit's cell decorated with a skull and cross bones, and topped with a cross. Such 'grotesque' grottos were used for contemplation and sometimes occupied by a hired hermit. Additional contemporary depictions of follies include the artificial pagoda and mosque at Kew Gardens and an Indian mausoleum based on the topographical aquatints of Thomas Daniells, done on his Indian travels.

Drawings from the Reverend William Gilpin's picturesque travel books show country scenery with ruins, in an oval format as viewed through the 'Claude' glass, a contemporary device said to clarify the near, middle, and distant sections of a view. Interest in nature was also fostered by poets such as Wordsworth and Thomson whose references in *The Seasons*, like 'umbrageous Dales ... and Caverns deep' challenged the so-called artificiality of English poetry. Garden design was influenced by the Sublime, demonstrated by J.M.W. Turner's watercolour *The Pass at St Gotthard, near Faïdo*. John Ruskin's painting of the same scene in emulation of Turner is in the exhibition, but not in the catalogue, although a manuscript page from *Modern Painters* is included. Here Ruskin quotes from Scott's *Marmion* on 'wild scenery'.

A 1798 publication of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* and a plan which Wordsworth made for the winter garden of his patron Sir George Paton, an illustration of a wonderful artificial rock garden by John Claudius Loudon, and a ghostly view of the ruined Melrose Abbey by Thomas Girton are all on view. Garden designs from Richard Payne Knight's *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem ... addressed to Uvedale Price*, show two alternate views of a garden, the second an 'improved' version designed to 'captivate the soul'. The entrepreneurial Humphry Repton is represented by several works including one of his famous Red Books, in which the depiction of the existing garden is covered by folding flaps showing the fantastic improvement possible with his designs. In the plan for the Brighton Pavilion a few old bare trees are replaced by exotic Indian temples borrowed from the Daniells' publication on *Hindoo Temples*. This was later built by Repton's assistant, John Nash. Imperialism also played a part in garden design, as all this coincided with the occupation of Delhi by the East India Company and subsequently the British Empire.

The smaller French section of the exhibition also shows a garden plan with improved overlay, a view

of Marie-Antoinette's artificial Swiss hamlet in the gardens of Versailles, and a large detailed plan of Père Lachaise cemetery, designed in the Napoleonic era as a romantic pilgrimage with sinuous lines and architectural fragments.

German gardens are represented by an engraving of a wild garden with a monk in a cave, from the important book on landscape gardens (1779–85) by Christian Hirschfeld. He argued that the natural garden had transformative potential for 'The individual, the nation and the world.' Night views, gardens, and English-style cottages lead to the sublime painting by Caspar David Friedrich of a shadowy moonlit garden with a figure amongst dark trees. The North German artists, Friedrich, and Phillip Otto Runge, sought to transmit through art their intense feelings in the face of a deep knowledge of nature. Friedrich's paintings were often based on altarpieces, with a lonely figure seen from the back, gazing into a sublime landscape. In Friedrich's painting, the moon, a source of spiritual energy, has been cut out and replaced with transparent paper, which was intended to be lit from behind.

The American section contains various examples of the proto-picturesque and sublime, including Frederic Edwin Church's oil sketch of Niagara Falls. Church was inspired by Ruskin's writing on 'water'—'The best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power'. Church was so impressed by this mighty scene that he initiated a drive for the preservation of the Falls as a State Reservation.

Depictions of manufactured ruins, monuments, cemeteries, and pleasure grounds precede the large, winning entry 'Central Park Competition Entry No. 33: The Greensward Plan of Central Park, 1858' by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Although the park was designed to provide for 'hundreds of thousands of tired workers ... a specimen of God's handiwork', the designers could not have anticipated the huge increase in Manhattan Island's population, and the great importance and constant use of this open space today. Olmsted based his plan on 'a single noble motif', disregarding the recent gardenesque style of John Claudius Loudon in favour of the earlier picturesque style of Price and Gilpin. The successful partnership between Olmsted and Vaux was the inspiration for the great parks movement across the United States of America. Various other documents, paintings, and prints related to Central Park make a fitting finale for this splendid exhibition.

Pamela Bell

Richard Aitken, *The Garden of Ideas: four centuries of Australian style*, The Miegunyah Press in association with the State Library of Victoria, Carlton, Vic., 2010.

Back in the 1970s, large chunks of Australian history were completely uncharted, and out of innate curiosity Beatrice Bligh, Peter Watts, and myself were part of a select band of warriors who delved into the intriguing realm of garden history, producing a number of books and an exhibition. Since that time the chief 'torch bearer' for the cause has been Richard Aitken, whose *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (with Michael Looker) is the foremost source on the topic, and whose other engaging publications are now joined by this marvellous new book conveying the ideas and imagery which have influenced designed landscapes in this country.

Richard Aitken's prodigious research reveals him as a fastidious sleuth, and *The Garden of Ideas* contains interesting new insights into our garden history. Within its pages we learn of that ancient and largely unknown place *Terra Australis Incognita*, of British intellectual and scientific thinking prior to 1788, and the important role of colonial botanic gardens in the pursuit of systematic and economic botany.

Connecting the dots can be an art form, and it is one thing for the Sydney nurseryman Thomas Shepherd to discuss in his published lectures (1836) the work of English landscape designer Humphry Repton;

it is quite another to determine that Shepherd and Repton were well acquainted neighbours and fellow garden designers.

Adelaide's newfound wealth—largely related to the discovery of copper at Burra in 1845—encouraged its citizens to consider more elaborate forms of patterned garden layouts, well conveyed in S.T. Gill's views of the extraordinary environs of Adelaide's Prospect House in 1850, and in George Francis's botanical compartments in the master plan (1864) for Adelaide Botanic Garden. Photographs of this botanic garden after 1865 show realisation of complex geometric bedding.

Sub-tropical landscapes inspired travellers, and the lush plants gave visual vigour to Victorian period gardens. One nineteenth-century director of Kew Gardens could reflect on the marvels of the rapidly deforested Illawarra region (south of Sydney) with its tree ferns, palms, cedars, Illawarra flame trees and orchids—as once possessing 'all the luxuriance of a Brazilian forest'. Marianne North made similar observations when taken there by the members of the Macarthur family in 1880.

This interest took William Guilfoyle to the North Coast of New South Wales and to the South Seas and influenced his layouts and use of unusual east coast plants at both the Botanic Gardens and Government House grounds in Melbourne.



Eugene von Guérard, 'Cabbage tree forest, American Creek', oil on canvas, 51.1 x 85.5 cm, 1860. [Wollongong City Gallery, purchased with assistance from the Wollongong Gallery Society, NSW Office of the Minister for the Arts, and Public subscription, 1984]



John Oldham, Narrows Interchange, Perth: perspective of overall plan, watercolour; and pen and ink on paper, 1966. [City of Perth Art Collection]

In yet another revelation, our author tells of how the English nurseryman J.G. Veitch exhibited South Sea plant collections to acclaim at the 1867 *Exposition Universale* in Paris—a show visited by Charles Moore, director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, in the company of his brother David (director of Glasnevin Botanic Garden, Dublin), and their friend, the influential garden writer William Robinson, whose *Gleanings from French Gardens* was shortly thereafter serialised in the *Sydney Mail*. Robinson went to author *The Wild Garden* (1870) and *The Subtropical Garden* (1871), both of which captured the public's imagination.

Later, in 1884, Charles Moore appointed French-trained gardener James Jones to the staff of Sydney Botanic Gardens. Moore and Jones, along with engineer Frederick Franklin (who had worked with Joseph Paxton of Crystal Palace fame) were responsible for the layout of Sydney's Centennial Park (1886–87), a remarkable translation of the great public parks being created in Britain and east coast America at that time.

The book also covers the twentieth century in detail, but with fewer surprises. Betty Maloney and Jean Walker's bush gardens and John Oldham's futuristic yet verdant freeway interchange at Perth Narrows were scene-setters, and a brief mention of the landscapes of the Hayman Island resort had me wondering whether they showed the hand of Guilford Bell (who designed its buildings).

The more revolutionary landscape designs of recent years, by the likes of Room 4.1.3's Vladimir Sitta and Richard Weller (the Museum of Australia in Canberra and an unrealised scheme for Centennial Park, Sydney); Anton James (Mount Penang Gardens, near Gosford), and Taylor Cullity Lethlean (Australian Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne) appear to have their origins—perhaps unknowingly—in abstract late twentieth century urban planning such as Edwards Madigan Torzillo and Briggs's Multi Function Polis (1990) for Adelaide or Bicentennial Park/Sydney Olympics (1980–2000).

The Garden of Ideas is both extremely interesting and visually stunning. It left me longing for access to a comprehensive picture and plan archive of Australian gardens—surely a worthy project for the next decade.

Howard Tanner

The Garden of Ideas book will be published on 1 October 2010 and is available at a discounted price to AGHS members—see flyer in this issue of *Australian Garden History* or details on the Society's website. An exhibition accompanying and drawn from *The Garden of Ideas* is being held at the Museum of Economic Botany within Adelaide Botanic Garden from 14 October 2010 until 27 February 2011. Entry is free and the exhibition is open daily from 10 until 4.

For the bookshelf

Jeremy Francis, *Cloudehill: a year in the garden*, Images Publishing, Mulgrave, Vic., 2010 (ISBN 9781864703771); hardback, RRP \$59.99

Mastermind of Cloudehill is Jeremy Francis who moved to Victoria's Dandenong Ranges nearly 20 years ago from Western Australia. Before that he lived on the family wheat and sheep farm, near New Norcia, 100 km north of Perth. When he lived on those dry plains, he imported perennials from the UK as a hobby but found, not surprisingly, they struggled in the hot, dry, windy summers of that area. His interest in gardening was further piqued by visits to British gardens with his English wife, Valerie.

Back in Australia, he says, 'I spent two years looking for a 'nice' area to garden; I must have looked at 20 or 30 sites and by incredible luck found this in the early 90s,' Jeremy explains. What was so 'nice' was that the Cloudehill site was formerly a working garden—part nursery and part cut flower farm—that had been seriously neglected since the 1960s. 'It was the beginning of years of obsession beyond the call of sanity!' says Jeremy.

Now he has given us the details of this 'obsession' and in the process shown us that not only is he a talented gardener but can write beautifully as well. Describing the Canadian redbud, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' as an outstanding plant, he says:

the heart-shaped leaves are deep aubergine purple, overlaid with a silvery iridescence, similar to some varieties of black table grapes. In fact, I struggle to think of anything other than black grapes fresh from the vine, their bloom mottled with dew, to give an idea of this colour. No other purple-leafed plant comes close.

He skilfully weaves the story of the creation of Cloudehill with his childhood, family, life on the land, and the Australian countryside. As he says:



Remembering the wind—the rattling hush of gum trees on any summer's day, like a wave spending itself over sand and the melancholic drone of the fine-leafed tamar scrub. A tight fence wire, vibrating in a soft eternal hum and the more complicated humming of telephone lines suspended from our house eaves in an enormous swoop down into the valley; from inside the house the wind over the wires sounded an interminable minimalist symphony. Very early morning, waking to the rhythmic metallic screech of a distant windmill set spinning by the east wind rising ...

This writing and editing style with flashbacks has the potential to be disruptive and irritating to the reader, but in Jeremy's book the whole becomes compulsive reading as he builds a wonderful picture of two different worlds—entertaining, informative and transporting the reader to a fairy tale garden where dreams come true.

Cloudehill: a year in the garden, however, is a slightly misleading title; the book is about much more than the singular achievement of making Cloudehill's garden; of equal importance is his record of Australian rural life in the 20th century.

Christine Reid

Recently released

Derelie Cherry, *Two Dogs & a Garden*, Paradise Publishers, Sydney, 2009 (ISBN 9780646509570): 240pp, hardback, RRP \$49.95

Most readers will be aware of plant breeder Bob Cherry, whose garden at Kulnura, NSW, has long

been recognised as possessing one of the richest plant displays in the country. In this profusely illustrated account, his wife paints an affectionate portrait of the garden, its creator, and the Paradise plant breeding programme.

Fiona Cowell, *Richard Woods (1715–1793): master of the pleasure ground*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2009 (ISBN 9781843835240): 283pp, hardback, RRP £50

The eighteenth century English landscape style is popularly linked with the parks of Capability Brown, and yet he was merely the best known of a field that included William Emes, Adam Mickel sen. and jun., Richard Woods, Thomas White sen. and jun. (with whom Thomas Shepherd worked), and Nathaniel Richmond. Each of these landscape gardeners brought a slightly different emphasis to their work, and until now little has been known of their oeuvre and working methods. Cowell shows Woods to have emphasised the pleasure ground and kitchen garden, and her detailed text should be required reading for anyone wishing to gain an enhanced understanding of the milieu in which Shepherd trained and worked.

Bee Dawson, *A History of Gardening in New Zealand*, Godwit, Auckland, 2010 (ISBN 9781869621568): 304pp, paperback, RRP \$NZ49.99

This is a beautifully judged, superbly illustrated volume. In its emphasis on gardening as an activity, Dawson's book usefully complements Matthew Bradbury's 1995 edited volume *A History of the Garden in New Zealand*. Dawson's social history background is clearly evident in her eye for the narrative interest that can be carried by illustrations as well as text, and these images—reproduced with sparkling clarity—also unobtrusively provide a national historical context. This publication could be a model for state or territory-based Australian garden histories.

Robert Dickson, *Addicted to Architecture*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, SA, 2010 (ISBN 9781862548695): 246pp, hardback, RRP \$80

This is an engaging autobiography, memoir, and monograph of Adelaide-based architect Robert Dickson, who in seeking his place within the modernist ethos of 'the new architecture' settled on a design philosophy which sought to shape environments in harmony with nature. Perhaps the most interesting chapter concerns Dickson's sojourn in Milan in the mid-1950s working in the office of Mangiarotti and Morassutti, a serendipitous outcome of his knowledge of the firm's work through the medium of *Domus* magazine.

Elizabeth Ellis, *Rare & Curious: the secret history of Governor Macquarie's collectors' chest*, The Miegunyah Press in association with the State Library of New South Wales, Carlton, Vic., 2010 (ISBN 9780522853797): 276pp, hardback (in slipcase with drawer), RRP \$59.99

With its beautifully crafted slipcase and secret drawer, rarely can a book have been designed so closely in the image of its subject. The author, a former Mitchell Librarian, lovingly and tantalisingly unfolds the history of the Macquarie collectors' chest and its companion, the Dixson Chest, which prove to be a microcosm of early colonial natural, cultural, and social history.



Robert Freestone, *Urban Nation: Australia's planning heritage*, CSIRO Publishing in association with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts and The Australian Heritage Council, Collingwood, Vic., 2010 (ISBN 9780643096981): 336pp, paperback, RRP \$79.95

Here at last is an authoritative, single-volume history of Australian planning, compact and well illustrated. Gardens and designed landscapes are prominent in many of the chapters, with carefully weighted analysis of grid plans and other forms of town planning, park lands, botanic gardens, garden cities and suburbs, housing density, decentralisation, urban consolidation, community action, environmental concerns, and the provision of open space.

It's almost Christmas time again and the seasonal book buying frenzy gets underway at your local bookshop or mail-order specialist very soon. We've squeezed in a bumper crop of titles this issue to whet your appetite.

Peter Emmett & Tony Kanellos (eds), *The Museum of Economic Botany at the Adelaide Botanic Garden: a souvenir*, Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, Adelaide, 2010 (ISBN 9780977560899): 186pp, paperback, RRP \$39.99

The Museum of Economic Botany within Adelaide Botanic Garden is a precious survivor from the Victorian era, and yet the remarkable transformation which the building and its collections have recently undergone—here described in a comprehensive series of short, well illustrated essays—has given the building new and possibly even greater relevance in an age of uncertainty; continuing, extending, and embellishing its traditional educational and interpretative roles.

Tilley Govanstone & Andrew Govanstone, *The Women Behind the Roses: an introduction to Alister Clark's rose-namesakes 1915–1952*, Rosenberg, Dural, NSW, 2010 (ISBN 9781877058936): 288pp, hardback, RRP \$49.95 (signed copies available directly from the authors, 11 William Street, Portland, Vic., 3305, for \$49.95 plus \$10 postage)

Here is an engaging story tracing 66 of the women after whom Alister Clark named his Glenara rose seedlings. They encompass a wide network of friends, ranging chronologically from his niece Jessie Clark (1915), to Mary Bostock (1952), niece of Clark's friend's Willy and Jim MacKinnon of Marida Yallock. Revealed is a fascinating slice of the social circle Clark and his fellow horticulturists enjoyed in the early to mid twentieth century.

Alison Halliday & Joanne Hambrett, *A Passion for Place: gardens of the Blue Mountains*, Bloomings Books, Melbourne, 2010 (ISBN 9781876473778): 242pp, hardback, RRP \$59.95

Just to hand as we go to press, this book on the wonderful garden heritage of the Blue Mountains will be reviewed in our next issue. Peter Watts contributes the foreword, Peter Valder a prologue, and Ian Brown the photographs. *A Passion for Place* has been published with the generous support of the Australian Garden History Society.

Dominique Jarrassé, *Grammaire des Jardins Parisiens: de l'héritage des rois aux créations contemporaines*, Parigramme, Paris, (2007), reprinted 2009 (ISBN 9782840964766): 272pp, paperback, RRP €22

Taking the form of a guidebook, this French-language *Grammaire* is packed with illustrations (historical and contemporary) and plans sufficient to give the visitor a sweeping garden history tour of

Paris. Well indexed, chronologically arranged, and compact in layout it should be an essential part of the discerning tourist's *équipage*.

Patrice de Moncan, *Les Jardins du Baron Haussmann*, Les Editions du M c ne, Paris, 2009 (ISBN 9782907970914): 144pp, paperback, RRP €15

The transformation wrought by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann ('un écologiste avant l'heure') in the layout of Paris during the 1850s–70s is widely known, yet there remains a paucity of works which explain the place of gardens in this remarkable era. Moncan's work, although in French, is sufficiently well illustrated and structured to give the English-only reader a simple introduction to the people, places, and plantings preferences that drove Parisian public garden making during those critical decades. It forms a useful complement to the edited volume of Simon Texier, *Les Parcs et Jardins dans l'urbanisme Parisien XIXe–XXe siècles* (Paris, 2001) as well as Dominique Jarrassé's *Grammaire* (reviewed above).

Lisa Slade, *Curious Colony: a twenty first century Wunderkammer*, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, Newcastle, NSW, 2010 (ISBN 9781920876081): 96pp, paperback, RRP \$29.95

This substantial exhibition catalogue makes a telling complement to the book by Elizabeth Ellis, *Rare & Curious*—both works place the Macquarie collectors' chest and its Newcastle origins centre stage. Here though, with the aid of curator Lisa Slade's essay and the many illustrations of early colonial and contemporary artworks, it is recent re-workings of the Wunderkammer theme that attract attention. So if 'artificialia' and 'naturalia' are your thing, snap this up for the library.

Matteo Vercelloni & Virgilio Vercelloni, *L'invention du Jardin Occidental*, Rouergue, Rodez, France, 2009 (ISBN 9782812699470): 280pp, hardback, RRP €45

This work has a complex history—first published in 1990; updated following the author's death, augmented, re-edited, then translated from Italian to French; and soon to be released in English translation (whose projected subtitle 'The history of an idea' perhaps best explains the authors' approach to the history of Western gardens). Even in French translation, this is a useful and well illustrated new account, of which we hope to give a fuller notice when the English edition appears.

Arbor Day and garden structures

Two items of interest from sister journals for readers to access. The first is a detailed article by David Jones on the foundations of Arbor Day in Australia, from its beginnings in Adelaide in the late 1880s, published in *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, (January–March 2010). The second is Lesley Garrett's entertaining account of 'Garden structures: lost, found and threatened' in the latest issue of *Australiana* (August 2010), quarterly journal of The Australiana Society.

www.australiana.org.au

Boomburbs: Andrew Merry

Dramatic aerial photographs seem to be flavour of the month, and why not? They capture the scene so compellingly and with such economical concision. They are also a key tool for garden historians. Catch the exhibition 'Boomburbs' at the Museum of Sydney from 16 October 2010, in which photographer Andrew Merry documents the creation of new suburbia in outer Sydney from an aerial perspective.

www.hht.net.au/whats_on/exhibitions

The Silent Wilderness: 19th century Australian landscapes

This exhibition, which explores the genre of wilderness painting in nineteenth-century Australian art featuring images of mountain ranges, waterfalls, forests, and lakes by some of the foremost landscape artists active in the colonies, runs at Geelong Gallery until 21 November 2010.

www.geelonggallery.org.au/exhibitions

Wattle Day centenary

The centenary of Australia's Wattle Day inauguration was marked on 1 September 2010 and to commemorate the occasion the Canberra Museum and Gallery has mounted an exhibition 'Wattle: the history of an Australian symbol'. Drawn largely from the private collection of Wattle Day aficionado Edwin Ride, the show features decorative arts, documents, and published works. The exhibition runs until 31 October 2010.

www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au/cmag

James Cook and the exploration of the Pacific

If you are—perchance—visiting Bern, in Switzerland, before 13 February 2011, catch this exhibition at the Historisches Museum. Comprising around 500 artefacts the exhibition is accompanied by a lavish hardback book, published in English last year by Thames & Hudson (RRP \$75). The first half of the text comprises 26 essays tracing the themes of Cook, the Enlightenment, the *Endeavour*, and Cook's encounters, while the remainder is a comprehensive illustrated catalogue.

www.captaincooksociety.com/ccsukah-bonn

Avenues of Honour

In time for Remembrance Day, an exhibition of photos of Avenues of Honour by horticulturist, photographer, and AGHS member, Sarah Wood opens at the Shrine of Remembrance. Avenues of Honour are a singularly Australian response to loss and the experience of war, and with no distinction between religion, race or rank, a particularly egalitarian approach to commemoration.

Each Avenue is unique. The earliest was planted by the community of Eurack in 1916 in memory and honour of their fallen. The largest from World War One is that at Ballarat, comprised of over 3,000 trees and stretching for over 21 km. Many Avenues have been lost through development, drought or neglect. Out of concern for the future of those remaining, Sarah has recorded the five Victorian heritage-listed Avenues. Haunting and beautiful memorials to the servicemen and women who gave their lives for their country.

Shrine of Remembrance, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne: 29 October 2010 to January 2011, open daily (except Christmas Day) 10–5, free entry.



Annual General Meeting, Launceston

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Sunday, 7 November 2010, at 8 30 am at Albert Hall, Tamar Street, Launceston, Tasmania.

There will be six vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee this year.

Italian sojourn for co-editor

Co-editor Christina Dyson, son Oliver, and husband Andrea Rizzi have recently relocated to Italy for a year. Based at Villa I Tatti—which houses the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies—Andrea will be deeply engaged in his chosen field of study (the dynamics of vernacular translation in Renaissance Italian courts, 1420s–80s),

while Christina will be thinking of us all from her hillside villa or whilst wandering in I Tatti's splendid formal gardens. She promises to contribute regular notes canvassing garden history issues ranging from local to global. Christina will also continue to co-ordinate the Diary dates, Profile, and Netscape sections of *Australian Garden History*, as well as seeking articles and contributions from outside our normal gene pool. I Tatti, the former home of art historian of late mediaeval and Renaissance art Bernard Berenson, is located in the hills on the eastern edge of Florence. This villa and its library sit amidst a modern Italian garden, created after the turn of the twentieth century by Bernard and Mary Berenson and English architect Cecil Pinsent.

www.itatti.it

Notes from a hillside villa

Greetings from Florence. We are finally settled in our apartment attached to San Martino a Mensola, an eleventh-century Romanesque church. The large bathroom window looks across a small olive grove and vineyard which belong to Berenson's Villa I Tatti, which is nestled discreetly amongst a large garden seemingly dominated from this viewpoint by dark green cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*). I haven't yet had the privilege of entering the hallowed territory of the Berenson villa and garden, but this Friday is a family evening—with a concert of early music in the garden—so I'm looking forward to that.

I Tatti, the former home of historian and critic of late mediaeval and Renaissance art Bernard Berenson, is located in the hills on the eastern edge of Florence. Surrounded by farmland, the villa and its library sit amidst an important modern Italian garden, created after the turn of the twentieth century by Bernard and Mary Berenson and English architect Cecil Pinsent.

Although in my mind's eye I had visions of a hilltop villa, San Martino a Mensola is, rather, a small church complex originally belonging to Benedictine monks then Benedictine nuns.

Mary Berenson purchased it from an Italian family and rented it out. It later became home to Bernard Berenson's librarian and is now divided into five apartments, one of which we occupy.

Great excitement is that we are also just a stone's throw away from Villa Gamberaia in Settignano (two bus stops and a 10-minute walk), which Oliver and I visited this morning as part of our self-styled 'Mornings in Florence' (with apologies to John Ruskin) excursions. Privately owned, it is a stunning garden; quite small, with beautiful views over the Arno valley and to Florence (dominated by Brunelleschi's dome) and all the elements seemingly typical of the quintessential Italian garden—avenues of cypress, small bosco, limonaia and potted lemons in giant terracotta pots, expansively borrowed views, and shell, marble, and stone inlaid grottos. Our visit was enhanced by the fact that we were the only people there.

My desk is in a lovely position at the window overlooking fields of olive trees, cypresses, and the wonderful roofscape of Florence beyond so you will perhaps excuse the brevity of these first impressions.

Christina Dyson

Diary dates

October 2010

Rhododendrons

South Australia

Saturday 16

A talk by Kenneth Cox, an international expert on rhododendrons from Scotland. This event is in conjunction with the Rhododendron Society. Further details including venue to be announced.

Mount Keira Scout Camp and Alne Bank

Southern Highlands

Sunday 17

This self-drive tour and 'own-food' picnic will begin at Mount Keira Scout Camp, historically associated with Paul Sorensen and the Hoskins family. The afternoon will be spent at Alne Bank, a historic estate with an eclectic formal garden, permaculture garden, and views of the Gerringong coastline in the distance. For information, contact Sue Trudeau on (02) 4872 3887 or strudeau@trudeau.com.au

Thomas Shepherd's nursery, Chippendale

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 17

Talk and walk with Joan Lawrence—Reminders of Thomas Shepherd's nursery, Chippendale. 2–4.30pm, meeting point to be advised when booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Yarra Valley regenerated gardens and landscapes

Victoria

Thursday 21

Bus trip exploring the Yarra Valley and the region's rejuvenation following the devastation of the 2009 bushfires. Tour includes visits to Gulf Station and Yering Station (now Chateau Yering), as well as the contemporary landscapes of Lubra Bend and Tarra Warra Museum of Art. Cost: \$75 members, \$80 non-members. Cost includes coach travel, morning tea, boxed lunch, garden entries, and tour notes. Departing 9.15am from the Arts Centre, St Kilda Road, returning 4.30pm. Contact Pamela Jellie on (03) 9836 1881 for further information.

Rock Valley spring walk

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Sunday 24

Spring walk in Rock Valley, Tidbinbilla, and BYO picnic lunch. 10.30am, meet at Rock Valley. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. For bookings and information contact Nancy Clarke on (02) 6248 6549 or nclarke@grapevine.com.au

Spring Cottage

Queensland

Sunday 24

Visit to Spring Cottage, one of Brisbane's oldest houses and garden, followed by afternoon tea at a nearby café. 2pm, meet at 40 Crescent Road, Hamilton (Refidex 140 K17). Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenk@picknowl.com.au

NOVEMBER 2010

Annual National Conference, Launceston

Tasmania

Friday 5–Sunday 7 / Optional day Monday 8

The Tasmanian Branch looks forward to welcoming you to Launceston in November 2010 to the Australian Garden History Society's 31st Annual National Conference. The cultural landscape and garden history of the north of the island will be explored in a range of papers and fieldtrips, from the fire-farmed Aboriginal landscape created over a period of more than 10,000 years ago, to a landscape described by the end of the nineteenth century as 'The Vision Splendid'.

Gilding the garden

Sydney and Northern NSW

Tuesday 16

Illustrated talk by Colleen Morris on twenty-first century renewal and new works in English historic gardens, including Arundel Castle, Boughton House, and the Duke of Devonshire's projects at Chatsworth visited at the Attingham Summer School 2010. 6.30 for 7pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential to Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

DECEMBER 2010

Visit to Lambrigg

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Sunday 5

Our Branch's end of year event will be held at Lambrigg. Further details will be contained in the next newsletter.

Christmas at Culzean, Westbury

Tasmania

Sunday 5

This year's Branch Christmas party will be in the north, at historic Culzean. Details to be advised.

Christmas walk and talk, Queens Park

Victoria

Tuesday 7

Travelers to the goldfields are said to have met at the fresh water lagoon, now the centre-piece of Queens Park. Join us at the gardens for a guided walk and picnic to celebrate another busy and successful year. 6pm for 6.30pm, Queens Park, cnr Mt Alexander Road and the Strand, Moonee Ponds, (Mel. 28J6). BYO picnic and friends. For further information contact Anne Vale on (03) 5664 3104.

End-of-year at Summerlees

Southern Highlands

Friday 10

For our now traditional end-of-year Branch function we will be gathering in the ballroom at the remarkable Summerlees, in Sutton Forest. More details will be released closer to the day. For information, contact Sue Trudeau, Branch Secretary, on (02) 4872 3887 or strudeau@trudeau.com.au.

Christmas get-together

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 12

4.30pm–8pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential to Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com.



Kiloren - Edna Walling garden for sale

Only the second time offered since inception - www.kiloren.com.au

An extraordinary opportunity exists to purchase one of Edna Walling's few extant gardens. Kiloren, at Crookwell in the NSW Southern Tablelands, has, for almost three decades, been in the care of gardening author Jennie Churchill and family. Designed by Walling in 1951, the 4 acre, cold-climate garden is complemented by a gracious home by renowned architect John Mansfield.

- Classic Walling features: extensive basalt stone walls and pathways softened by relaxed planting, the need to explore to discover the garden's hidden corners, skilful design of a sloping site, superb collection of hardy flowering trees, shrubs and perennials including many of Walling's signature plants.
- Double brick, north-facing home designed and positioned to capture garden views from every room. Beautifully formal lounge with open fire and full length picture windows; intimate, atmospheric dining room; cosy kitchen with adjoining, sunny family room (slow combustion fire); 3 bedrooms, main with dressing room and en-suite; mud room, laundry, 3rd bathroom; garage with internal access; central heating; separate games/billiards room.
- Additional second house on separate title: lounge, dining, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, study (or 3rd b/r), laundry, bathroom, garage with internal access.
- Town water and excellent bore water supply.
- 1km from town centre but very private: house and garden on 15 acres of fertile basalt soil.

Expressions of Interest invited

Contact: Tronn Alstergren, 378 Auburn St, Goulburn P: 0412 625 350 Stephanie Hammond, McGrath Estate Agents P: 0414 997 328

Reade Park Croquet Club rescued

Jeanette Waterman

In January this year the Reade Park Croquet Club reluctantly advertised on the Croquet SA website ‘that the lease for the Club house and court facilities was about to run out and would not be renewed’. The Club was to be wound up as membership had dwindled to less than ten and it could neither sustain the program nor justify playing on. Eighty years earlier—on 10 April 1929, with 13 paid-up members—playing days were fixed for Wednesdays and Saturdays. The rules of the Club, which had been supplied by Millswood Croquet Club, were later read and adopted before being posted in the club house. It was also decided that a flag for the Club be procured and that the colours be cream and royal blue with the letters R.P.C.C. in the centre.

So at the beginning of 2010, just before the Club flag was lowered for the last time, an SOS was posted to South Australian branch members of the Australian Garden History Society and other garden-orientated groups to rally in support of this important lawn sports icon. The Club greatly appreciated the immediate and enthusiastic response from many local AGHS members, who willingly paid their \$100 annual membership fee regardless of their interest in playing. A new lease was signed with Mitcham City Council and in April play recommenced on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

The historical significance of the Club lies both in its name—after Charles Reade the first Government town planner to be appointed in Australia—and also for its location and function as part of the Colonel

Light Gardens suburb. This is Australia’s most complete example of an early twentieth century garden suburb designed by Charles Reade (1880–1933). Whilst in the United Kingdom, Reade—a New Zealander by birth—had familiarised himself with the work of Ebenezer Howard and the Garden



Grange Farm was subdivided to form the main part of Colonel Light Gardens, and these two views show the red gums at the current croquet club entrance in 1915 and 2010.



SA Branch Christmas

Drinks event: 4–7 pm, Sunday, 5 December, at Reade Park Croquet Club, Flinders Avenue, Colonel Light Gardens. The pleasure of croquet as a lawn sport will be explained in a short talk followed by some quick coaching so members and their guests will have the opportunity to play. Please bring a plate of Christmas fare—drinks provided. \$10 AGHS members, \$15 guests.



Reade Park Croquet Club members posing before the club house in December 1938.



Bird's-eye view of Colonel Light Gardens (originally known as Mitcham Garden Suburb) showing town planner Charles Reade's original conception for this pioneering and still substantially intact garden suburb.

City Movement and became a proponent of this approach when he arrived in 1914 in Adelaide. In 1917 he drew the comprehensive plan for the model garden suburb which included public open space in the form of recreation areas, parks, and formal gardens. By 1927 the number of houses constructed had reached 952. Catering particularly for returned servicemen and their families, the slogan of the model garden suburb was: 'Comfort — Convenience — Beauty'.

Another aspect of the plan was the retention of existing trees and the planting of new ones, in avenues of like species, to formalise streetscapes and boundaries. At the entrance of the Reade Park Croquet Club are to be found River Red Gums dating from the time the land was used for agriculture and which formed part of the original drive to Grange Farm. These magnificent mature trees add to the resonance of the landscape and the enjoyment of playing on the croquet courts.

Reade Park Reserve formed the second tier of open space provided in Reade's plan and his suggestions for use included lawn bowls, tennis, and croquet clubs. So, through the efforts of AGHS and like-minded friends, the traditions and pleasures of croquet continue at the Club.

The Club has just published its first edition of its new newsletter entitled 'The Rush' (so named for a rush—a roquet stroke in which your ball hits another ball and sends it to where you require it so that you can take croquet at that position on the court) and an AGHS working bee on the plantings of the court surrounds is planned for the near future.

Jeanette Waterman is Club Historian for the RPCC. Thanks to Richard Heathcote, Marilyn Kuchel, and Mark Waterman for assistance with this article. Further reading: Christine Garnaut, *Colonel Light Gardens: model garden suburb*, 2nd ed., Crossing Press, Sydney, 2006—see www.clghs.org.au for availability.



Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.